



WEST VALLEY STATE OF THE STATE

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thursday, January 12, 2012

Good Afternoon -- and Happy Centennial Year to all of you.

The West Valley is my home ... so, I've been looking forward to this day -- to be able to be with you again -- my friends -- and neighbors -- and fellow Arizonans.

I'm grateful for my years on Westmarc's Executive Committee and Board of Directors -- because they gave me a great appreciation for the kind of leadership that continues to guide the West Valley.

I'm still an Honorary Director of the Board, by the way so I'm never far away from what you're doing here.

Whether it's the temporary sales tax -- the settlement on Luke Air Force Base encroachment -- the Loop 303 -- or the Foreign Trade Zone -- the vision of people like Harry Paxton, Ray Jones, Art Othon, Jack Lunsford and, now, Michelle Rider -- continue to set the agenda for prosperity for the businesses and citizens of Arizona.

I don't have to tell you that I love this state. It's an extraordinary place.

After a long, hard day, I look forward to walking into my garden to rest and to relax, enjoy the wildlife, watch the sun set, and plan for the challenges ahead.

Yes, even including preparing for a State of the State address.

We enter our Centennial Year proud of the land that our founding pioneers both tamed and developed -- while they were tested by time and circumstances.

We will NOT betray their confidence or squander our state inheritance!

I intend to see that Arizona remains the last frontier of opportunity!

The titans of the century that we're leaving behind understood – and it's important for us to remember – that the federal government played a key role in the development of Arizona. It's an example of how federal and state cooperation CAN – and SHOULD – work.

Now, as you might have heard, I take a back seat to NO ONE when it comes to taking on Washington D.C. – when it comes to standing up for Arizona. But, there was a time when we could forge the RIGHT partnership with Washington, but, sadly, in far too many instances -- that's just not true anymore.

Today, Arizonans and Americans are saying to Washington, D.C.:

We don't like an ever-expanding government threatening our personal liberties.

We don't like government living beyond its means and trying to be everything to everyone.

We don't like unconstitutional -- and unfunded -- health care mandates.

AND, by the way -- we don't like open borders either.

We have so many monuments in Arizona that remind us of how things are supposed to work -- in partnership with Washington.

Places like the Theodore Roosevelt Dam, recently celebrating its 100th anniversary.

The Central Arizona Project is another monument to federal-state cooperation started in 1973, at Lake Havasu, and ... twenty years, 336 miles and \$4 billion later -- it was bringing life-sustaining water to cities, and farms and Native American communities.

In October of last year, I had the honor of helping dedicate the O'Callaghan-Tillman Memorial Bridge. It's an extraordinary structure --the product of the late Arizona Congressman Bob Stump's relentless pushing and prodding. The bridge restores the freedom to move commercial traffic across Hoover Dam.

With the completion of the bridge, now is the time to add another monument to federal-state cooperation – the future interstate highway linking Phoenix and Las Vegas – the “I-11.”

It will connect two of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country.

By the way -- these are the two largest cities in the nation not connected by the inter-state highway system. This project will promote commerce, tourism and trade across the western United States – and it needs to be completed without further delay.

These are markers to celebrate and to revere.

Still, we all remember Arizona's dark times as we headed into 2009.

I took the helm of a ship I cherished – but it was a ship that was sinking, weighed down by over-spending and expanding bureaucracy – and – quite simply – poor navigation.

Frankly, those dark times are WORTH remembering -- so we can truly appreciate how far we've come -- together.

I know those struggles were not fun. I know sometimes tempers were frayed -- patience abandoned, and decorum tested.

But, I also know this ...

Arizona has been saved. And, you all were a part of that great mission.

We all know it wasn't by accident.

We had a plan – and, it was the right plan.

How do I know? Because I stand here in front of you, and proudly say ...

Ladies and gentlemen, Arizona now has a balanced budget!

Arizona now has a positive cash balance!

But, there's more ...

Our State Government is smaller, more efficient, and focused on the future.

Now, an integral part of our recovery plan was the passage of Proposition 100 – the one-cent sales tax approved overwhelmingly by the voters for three years.

The voters were promised it would be temporary. Many doubted that.

Well, I gave my word to the voters.

And, a promise is a promise ...

So, I'm here today to say: This tax will end on my watch!

This tax will end after three years in 2013.

We're blessed to live in a growing state where Arizona families will --- and should --- turn to public schools with confidence to educate their children. Our state is a leader in allowing parents to choose a school that best meets their children's needs.

We must find a way to fund the results we want and reward those educators who lead us into our next century.

That's my commitment to children for the next century -- quality teachers -- a safe environment -- a setting of parents' choosing -- data driven decisions and the highest of standards.

And, here's how we're going to get there.

Arizona Ready has already established more rigorous standards for students, teachers and schools, and provides new methods for parents to gauge student achievement and monitor school performance. It also sets yearly benchmarks to track Arizona's education improvements between now and 2020.

Parental involvement remains vital to a child's education; and I'm going to lead a campaign this year to encourage parents to read to their children.

Parents deserve to know about their children's teachers, so we're producing a searchable database so that every parent can research the license and any disciplinary actions taken against their children's teachers, and reform the teacher decertification process.

I'm asking the Arizona Ready Council to develop recommendations for Legislative consideration to fund reforms that promote the results we want in both K-12 and Higher Education. And, we need to continue the momentum to address performance based funding and expand university and community college partnerships. We can also help students succeed in high volume classes by investing in course redesign technology.

Excellence in education is the foundation for job creation -- something we're doing as a part of the great Arizona comeback

We're creating jobs -- 46,000 of them in the last year alone.

In fact, Arizona's job growth ranks 7th best in the nation.

Not bad, my friends, not bad at all.

And, we're just getting started!

There's more good news. Our state credit outlook has stabilized. Companies are again locating in Arizona -- attracted by our lean regulations -- competitive tax policies and ready workforce.

While this is all great news – it's not enough.

Too many Arizonans remain unemployed or underemployed.

This economic downturn has been tough for them and their families.

I haven't forgotten about them.

Together with all of you here, I intend to do everything in my power to help Arizonans prepare for our ever-changing economy.

Together, just like last year, let's continue to lower taxes, cut regulation and tell all employers that Arizona means business!

Arizona is open for business!

We need to make Arizona the free-market beacon to the nation and the world where you have the opportunity to prosper.

How are we going to create the conditions for success?

Well, on Monday I released a detailed written policy agenda.

Now, you'll be glad to hear I won't be going through it line-by-line this afternoon -- so relax.

But, I did ask for job because i want to permanently reform state government.

I'm here to make a difference.

We're ALL here to make a difference.

Here's what Arizonans -- the nation -- and world -- will see when we succeed:

They're going to see the personal incomes of Arizonans increase.

They're going to see us recapture our position as a top job creator by getting back to the fundamentals that built Arizona in the first place.

They're going to see excellence and accountability in our education system.

They're going to see a refashioned government equipped for our next 100 years of prosperity.

It will be a limited, efficient, nimble government – including personnel reform that improves the management of the workforce -- restructures the grievance and appeal systems -- and modifies human resource practices.

And, they're going to see our passion for border security and public safety make Arizona a special place for families and businesses to thrive.

There's no higher priority than the safety of children -- so we're going to strengthen safeguards by involving law enforcement in investigations that involve allegations of criminal conduct.

We're going to train all CPS workers in law enforcement investigation techniques; and improve training at every level. And, we're going to allow case workers to advance their careers while staying in the field instead of having to join the management ranks.

Finally, we're revamping the abuse hotline to improve screening.

Arizona is going to fulfill its obligation to the mentally ill and children under state supervision or care. For the seriously mentally ill, planning is already underway to start a pilot program that integrates physical and behavioral health services for Medicaid-eligible SMI individuals. This will result in fewer hospitalizations and less reliance on the crisis system. I'm also going to propose services that assure those individuals receive medications and support toward recovery.

This past summer, Arizona faced a frightening enemy – an enemy that threatened lives and livelihoods and the natural beauty of our state. More than 1 percent of the total land mass in Arizona burned.

Those fires proved -- once again -- that federal land management policies have left our public lands overgrown and vulnerable to the kinds of massive blazes we saw last year. We need a return to responsible thinning and active management of federal lands.

Here is my question to the federal government: How long will Arizona and other western states have to burn before you do something? We can't afford another disaster.

Arizona is trying to lead the way with its 4 Forest Restoration Initiative. 4FRI has been delayed almost a year now. We need a contractor to be chosen so we can start thinning our forests. 4 FRI was a truly collaborative process and it needs to be implemented NOW!

We've done our part. We need the federal government to do ITS part!

Along with the physical devastation, personal tragedy struck when veteran firefighter "Dino" Classay was killed in the line of duty while responding to the Diamond Fire on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation near Whiteriver. He was a Fort Apache Hotshot

Crew veteran, one of only seven all-Native American interagency hotshot crews in the country.

That heroism is not uncommon in our state, and, tragically, neither is grievous loss of those who have given the last true measure of devotion for their country – for you and for me –

Ten of our finest fell carrying the flag of the United States of America this past year ... And five law enforcement officers from around the state gave their lives to keep us safe. And just a few days ago a Maricopa County Sheriff's deputy was killed in the line of duty.

We honor their memory and we will never forget what they have done for us. They are forever a part of Arizona -- men who loved their country and their state -- with affection only heroes can know.

On February 14, 1912, President William Howard Taft proclaimed Arizona the 48th -- and last -- of the contiguous states to enter the Union of the United States of America.

Ten decades later, we celebrate Arizona's 100th anniversary of statehood and I know the Arizona Centennial Commission has been hard at work traveling the state and encouraging all Arizonans to get involved.

The dome of our Capitol is shining once again.

I like to think that it's shining with the same copper brilliance once intended. It's a brilliance that says ... Arizona's gleam is back, and, its future is bright.

There's just one problem ... most of our Capitol Complex ... is not ours.

So, to fortify that symbol – to make all of our capitol truly ours once again -- I'm asking the Legislature to send me a bill by Statehood Day that allows me to buy back the Capitol Complex!

Together, we can celebrate the burning of that mortgage!

Just east of Phoenix International Raceway -- near Turn #4 -- there is a hill often used for seating called Monument Hill. Toward the top of the hill is another symbol – it's a little known historical marker with a concrete "X."

Called the Initial Point, its where surveys for the state first began and still remains the site for all surveys conducted in Arizona. As the official midpoint of the state, Monument Hill is essentially "the heart of Arizona."

The Arizona Centennial -- like the monuments that mark Arizona's 100 year-old path -- such as the Initial Point – gives us a chance to set our bearings for the next century –

an opportunity for all Arizonans to share our great pride in the past, and prepare for the future with a compass heading that is true, worthy and resolute.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe we are the surveyors of our Second Century.

So, will you please join me as we continue to re-build this great state – a state with restrained regulation – limited government -- a steadfast commitment to the 10th Amendment -- an unwavering commitment to advancing freedom.

I ask you, once again, to join me in securing those freedoms:

-- Freedom to build a business -- without suffocating regulation.

-- Freedom to build a life and to raise a family -- without the "nanny state" interfering.

-- Freedom to speak the truth about government -- and those who would lead it -- without fear of retribution.

-- And freedom to increase your income -- without someone telling you that you're making too much money.

However, freedom should never be separated from responsibility.

So, I'm asking every one of you in this room – every Arizonan beyond these walls -- to make a personal statement in support of our Centennial year.

I'm calling on everyone to make a contribution to the future – volunteer – volunteer at your local school – volunteer in service at your place of worship – volunteer at shelters, at food banks.

People are still hurting.

So, volunteer for the least and the lost.

Volunteer to provide food or clothing to the less fortunate. Lend a hand at a charity, retirement home, hospital – anywhere your talents, time and heart can be invested in the lives of others.

Let the spirit of service be at the heart of our centennial year.

And, there is something else you can do, too.

This past November, I traveled to Washington, with Mayor Scruggs and Michael Bidwill to meet with Air Force Secretary Michael Donley.

We discussed linking the F-16 transition from Luke with the arrival of the F-35 to ensure the base is not adversely impacted from a drop in plane numbers and flights.

Secretary Donley assured me the Air Force is committed to bringing the F-35s to Luke and any negative impact their arrival might have will be minimized. We expect the Air Force to release the F-35 Environmental Impact Statements soon and Public Comment Hearings on these EIS statements for Luke AFB have been scheduled to begin February 13th.

I encourage as many people as possible to attend these hearings and have your voices heard by the key decision makers in support for the F-35 assignment here at Luke.

Luke needs the support of its communities and neighbors so it can continue to train the best pilots in the world ... right here in our backyard!

Barry Goldwater wrote an article for the February 14, 1962, edition of the *Tucson Daily Citizen* -- titled "Arizona's Next Fifty Years."

He concluded his look 50 years into the future where we stand today -- with the following words:

My children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be as happy living here as I have been during the first 50 years of statehood, because the people will remain warm and kind and thoughtful. And even though much of what we know as desert will have disappeared, there will remain a sufficient amount of natural beauty to satisfy all of the desires of the 10 million people who will live here.

And, Barry Goldwater closed with -- Even though I hope to be on Cloud Nine -- or Ten -- or whatever they allot me -- I am sure that 50 years from now, I will look down on this delightful spot on earth, and be envious of the people who call Arizona their home in the year 2012.

Well, we know that Barry Goldwater -- and the rest of our pillars of the past -- are still watching -- watching what we do with the next 100 years.

I believe our destiny arrives -- in this time -- and in this place -- and binds us together in some wonderful and mysterious way with the great giants of our past.

I believe that we are connected in common purpose with the Keepers of the Arizona range.

To each, we say: You have shown us the way. You, and your families, plowed the fields -- harvested the crops -- mined the ore -- raised the cattle -- and endured the dust and the heat -- the rains and the wind -- to allow this territorial land to rise up as a symbol of what freedom and individual courage can create.

I hope, years from now, that my career, my record, my life ... guided by God's grace ... all stand as proof of my love for this beautiful state -- and my caring for all who call this place home.

In his, February 14, 1912 inaugural address, Governor George W.P. Hunt, concluded his remarks by saying, "I have the hope, the ambition and determination to so discharge my public trust that it will be said of me that 'he started the state off RIGHT'."

Well, I have similar hope -- and determination -- to so serve the people of Arizona that it will be said of you and me together -- one hundred years from now -- "They started the state off right ... into its Second Century."

May God bless you -- and our glorious 100-year-old state -- and may God always bless and protect the United States of America.

Thank you.